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Is It Worth the Awful Expenditure?

The outrages on Christian missionaries committed by the Chinese have provoked a discussion as to the wisdom of undertaking to convert those stiff-necked people at the expense of so much danger to the devoted men and women sent to China by the missionary societies. It begins to be questioned, even among the stoutest advocates of Christian missions themselves, if the past and possible results of the attempts to evangelize China justify their enormous cost in life, suffering, and in money.

The most striking contribution to this discussion is furnished by the Rev. Mr. DONOHOO, a Presbyterian pastor of Pittsburgh. In a letter to the *Tribune* he substantially answers that question in the negative, although, of course, he is earnestly in favor of Christian missions generally. Mr. DONOHOO explains that he has never been in China, and therefore has had no opportunity for personal observation of the fruits of missionary efforts there; but he has had long and large experience as a missionary among the Chinese here, and as he has also distinguished himself as their defender against unjust prejudice and consequent ill treatment, he is a witness whose testimony regarding them and their characteristics has special value. As the result of this experience, says Mr. DONOHOO, "I have never yet found one who gave evidence of thorough conversion to Christianity, though I have known a large number who have been in our Sabbath schools and a few who have professed conversion." The inference from this statement is that, if the evangelization of the Chinese is as hopeless here, where they are surrounded by the influences of Christian civilization, it must be still more hopeless in China itself; but Mr. DONOHOO does not go so far as to draw it. He simply says that he has seen enough to form his own conclusions "as to the results of the missionary efforts put forth for their conversion." What those conclusions must be is obvious.

Moreover, his observations among the Chinese who have immigrated to this country coincide with the reports sent and brought by many of our navy officers and by American and European merchants and other representatives who have visited China and lived among the people. They all bear witness to the devotion of the Christian missionaries there, but they express the opinion that the self-sacrifice is almost wholly wasted, so far as the Chinese are concerned. Like Mr. DONOHOO, they question the genuineness of the conversions of which the missionaries are so hopeful, saying that they are almost invariably due to the interested motives which have gained for the superstitious converts the title of "rice converts" in China, or people who have professed Christianity for the sake of the loaves and fishes distributed among them by the missionaries. The only fruits of missionary effort which seem to these observers genuine and valuable are the education provided for the young and the medical attendance and instruction furnished, yet it is these more especially which have been used by Chinese malignity against the missionaries, and the consequent destruction of the lives of missionaries and the property of the missions. Instead of being attracted to Christianity, the Chinese people, as the late atrocities indicate, are now more than ever inclined against it. It is hateful to them, both in itself and because it is a religion which they regard as foreign. The efforts of the missionaries to educate children and to heal the sick are perverted by their imaginations into devices to corrupt and even to torture and destroy them with savage fiendishness.

The inference from Mr. DONOHOO's remarks and their confirmation by American and European visitors to China is that the enormous self-sacrifice which the insignificant results of missionary effort cost can be expended elsewhere with far greater practical returns. The missionaries, in their human, zealous and devoted men and women ought not to be stimulated to risk their lives in vain attempts to convert to Christianity a people whose evangelization has been proved in actual experience to be impossible.

Even in religious enterprises, it is well to ask if the game is worth the candle.

Pretentious Ignorance on Exhibition.

Two years ago the small "leisure class" of individuals, calling themselves and calling each other municipal reformers, organized "The American Society of Municipal Improvements" having members in every large city of the country. A so-called national convention of this society is to be held in Cincinnati on Sept. 11, 12, and 13. Invitations have been issued broadcast, and Chairman HERMANN and Secretary BUTTERFIELD of the organization promise in their bulletins to members that they will "spare no pains in making the stay of the delegates both profitable and pleasant" while they are in Cincinnati.

These municipal reformers, who claim to have devoted their time and efforts to a profound study for complete mastery of all serious municipal problems, aver that the great majority of American voters in the large cities fall short of comprehending the questions involved in the abstruse science of "municipal government," so called. It might reasonably be supposed, therefore, that the officials of the American Society of Municipal Improvements, as one of the results of their researches, would have, at least, some smattering, superficial knowledge of the elementary divisions of public departments in the populous, thriving, and world-famous town of New York, the chief among American cities.

But it is not so. The invitation of the American Society for Municipal Improvements under date of Aug. 17 to the legislative branch of our city government is addressed to the "Board of Council." There is no such Board in this town. The fame of the New York City Board of Aldermen has apparently failed to reach Municipal Improvers in Cincinnati.

In the Cincinnati municipal reformers say that they have sent of their invitations "five copies to your city."

They have sent one copy to the Mayor, one

to the Board of Council, whatever that may be, and one to the "Board of Public Works." There is no such Board here.

The letter of invitation is accompanied by a request for a representation by delegates in Cincinnati on Sept. 11 of the following local New York departments: "The Water Works," the "Civil Engineering Department," the "Infantry Department," the "Purchasing Department," and the "Department of Public Construction."

As may be seen by these announcements, the American Society of Municipal Improvements, in its profound study of the affairs of municipalities, has not, as yet, ascertained even the names of the chief public departments of this city, although at an expenditure of five cents it could procure from the *City Record* an exact statement in detail, as provided by law, not only of all the public departments, but of salaries and offices of the incumbents of such departments. If the letters sent by New York are typical of the letters sent by the Society of Municipal Improvements to other American cities, it is making a large amount of business for the Dead Letter Office in Washington.

The plain fact of the matter is that the so-called non-partisan municipal reformers act in complete ignorance and childish disregard of the existing conditions in the government of American cities. A few individuals of no political account whatever, without influence and without accurate or useful knowledge, form a "Reform Club," where they are protected from the possibility of contact with intelligent politicians who could instruct them in the rudiments of city government in the United States. Lord DUNDREY declared that he might one day become a fisherman, as he knew as little about fish as anything else. Similarly, the miscellaneous reformers seem to have taken up the question of municipalities because they know as little about them as they do about anything else. As their preliminary invitations indicate, the measurements of their ignorance will be publicly exhibited at Cincinnati in September.

Mr. Morton Declines.

The Hon. JULIUS STERLING MORTON has made himself liked in Virginia by his warm recommendation of the State as a farming community. He has pointed out that it is not necessary to go West for a farm when good land can be bought cheap at no great distance from Washington. He has returned to the subject with evident predilection, and there has even been a report that he intends to settle in Virginia at the end of his job in the Department of Agriculture and grow up with the country, finding, or hoping to find, there the way to political office which seems blocked against him in Nebraska. He is a very decent sort of farmer and a very active letter writer, and a tariff for revenue only man of long standing; and he will be liable to make matters interesting wherever he settles.

The Secretary of the exercises at the Manassas Farmers' Institute last week and lauded the Virginia farmers so copiously that some of the audience were moved into nominating him for President. "Virginia feels deeply grateful to you, Mr. Secretary," cried ex-Congressman MEREDITH, "and she may find a way through your delegation, of expressing her gratitude in the next National Convention." The Secretary shook a deprecating head, and smiling, put the nomination by.

Another Virginian came to the assault. "I have no sort of doubt," said he, "that the next delegation from Virginia will vote for Mr. MORTON for President." The Secretary stood firm. Hear his refusal of the kindly crown:

"I am free to say, gentlemen, that while I appreciate the compliment you pay me, when I met through with my present office I am entirely and completely done. I shall never hold another. As for the Presidency, it will probably, as a nomination in the next Democratic Convention, go to Mr. PERHAM, or perhaps O'NEIL, possibly somebody else of the East."

Still, the Virginians were not satisfied. They said that the nomination must westward take its way; and who else so fit for it as Mr. MORTON? But the enemy of free Government seed continued unmoved. "Gentlemen," he repeated, "I am holding the old office I shall ever hold."

These declinations in advance don't have all the authority of Holy Writ. They are easily revocable. Yet it is to Mr. MORTON's credit that he doesn't imitate his chief. Nobody hears Mr. CLEVELAND suggesting WHITNEY or OLNEY or saying that this is the last office he shall ever hold.

Old Age Homes in Vienna.

The regulations made by law in Germany for the support of supernumerary workmen, and those contemplated for England by Mr. CHAMBERLAIN, have directed attention to the measures taken for the same purpose in other countries. Especially noteworthy is the plan followed in Vienna, an account of which is given by Miss EDITH SKELLEN in the current number of the *Nineteenth Century*.

It appears that more than a century ago the Emperor JOSEPH II., who in so many ways was the benefactor of his countrymen, promulgated the doctrine that a man who has worked in the days of his strength has the right to be supported by his fellows when old age comes upon him. He enacted that any destitute person might, at the age of sixty, claim from his commune either free board and lodging, or a pension equal to one-third of his previous average yearly earnings. On this statute are founded the present Poor law regulations of Vienna, so far as they relate to the treatment of the aged. All persons who have a right of settlement in the Austrian capital, that is, about 30 per cent. of the inhabitants, may on and after their sixtieth birthday claim either a pension or admission to an old age home, provided, of course, they cannot support themselves and have no relatives who are bound by law to support them. As, however, there is a large class of men who are usually more than four times that number who wish to live in their instead of accepting pensions, the Poor law authorities are deciding who shall be admitted. The result is that the great majority of the inmates are persons of good character, whose destitution is due to misfortune. Partly on this account, and partly owing to the treatment received, no disgrace attaches to residence in an old age home. An Austrian would no more think of being ashamed because his father was in such an institution than he would an Englishman because a relative of his had rooms in Hampton Court.

Of the six old age homes belonging to Vienna, only two are in the city itself; the others are at some little distance from the outskirts. They are all in healthy localities and are fine large buildings with gardens. By way of example may be taken the great yellow building in the Spitalgasse, about a mile from the Ring. The house, which is described as a model of cleanliness and order, is built around a great court-

yard, and on the side furthest from the street abuts on one of the most beautiful gardens in Vienna. To the passer by the house appears to be a popular resort, and on fine afternoons the garden is quite crowded. Not, however, that the place stands open to all the world; only the relatives and friends of those who live there are admitted. But, whether or not they ever cross its threshold, the poor of Vienna all look upon this building as their especial property, and take a personal pride in its well-kept air.

With regard to the interior arrangements of the Spitalgasse Home we are told that each wing is divided into a number of large, lofty rooms, opening onto a long corridor. In each room there are from ten to twenty comfortable beds equipped with a plenty of warm coverlets. By each bed is a sort of "whatnot" with a cupboard on one side for clothes, and shelves on the other; there are chairs and tables standing about. In summer the bedrooms are gay with flowers. The corridors, which are well warmed in winter and furnished with settees, serve as general sitting rooms. Here, when it is too cold to be out of doors, the old men bring their pipes and the women their knitting. There is much talking over the news of the day, for the inmates subscribe for daily papers, one for each corridor. We should mention that although the corridors are regarded as the common property of the inmates, the women and their sleeping rooms are a wing of the building separated from that allotted to the men.

The commissariat of the Spitalgasse Home is carefully organized on the restaurant principle. The Poor Law Department, instead of providing the inmates with food, allows them to buy it for themselves, and to this end gives each of them 20 kreutzers, or about ten cents a day. The old people are under no obligation to go to the home restaurant, but they rarely fail to do so, for nowhere else can they obtain such good value for their money. From the bill of fare quoted by Miss SKELLEN we learn that half a pint of soup, with rice, can be bought for less than a cent; a plate of roast beef, lamb, or pork for four cents; half a pint of potatoes, cabbage, or turnips for less than a cent; half a pint of beer or a glass of old white wine for less than two cents. Within certain limits the inmates of the home can take their meals when they choose; the coffee, dishes, and confectionery are excellent, and there is nothing in the appearance of the restaurant to distinguish it from one frequented by the lower middle class.

The controlling purpose of these old age homes is to assure to the inmates the largest possible measure of independence, and consequently of self-respect. The clothes question is settled in a common sense way. Such of the old people as have clothes of their own wear them; the others are supplied by the Poor Law Department. In the latter case, however, the dress is not uniform; it is of the kind worn by the artisan class. Pains are taken to avoid the English custom of affixing a badge of pauperism to the recipients of public help. All the inmates, with the exception of the invalids, are required to keep their clothes in good repair and to pay attention to their personal appearance. The hall porter has orders to allow no one to go out until he has "tidied up"; the regulation is said to have the warm approval of the pensioners themselves, most of whom are described as pictures of neatness. Amazing to English ears is one of the laundry regulations; the inmates are warned that only their bed linen and clothes are washed gratuitously, not their Putzwasche, or lace frills and furbelows. And what many of the old people supplement their 20 kreutzers a day by earning a little money on their own account, and the Poor Law authorities provide regularly paid work for such as have the strength or wish to do it. It is true that they only pay 10 kreutzers for six hours' work, but even this sum may be pleasantly expended at the restaurant.

Moreover, even in an old age home there is a chance of rising in the world. Such of the old people as prove especially trustworthy may hope to become paid officials of the institution.

We note, finally, that in these Vienna refuges for old age, the discipline is of the mildest. Practically, the inmates may do just as they like, as long as they are orderly. When once they have made their rooms neat, they may lounge about all day long. In each home there is a chapel where mass is celebrated daily, but the old people are free to go there or not. Should they wish, they may leave the home every day at one o'clock, and they need not return until eight in the evening. They have, moreover, the right to spend one whole day with their friends every week, and once a year they may go away for a whole month. Naturally, however, these privileges are conditional upon good behavior, and should any of the pensioners show a disposition to abuse their liberty, it is curtailed. On the whole, one is not surprised to hear that it would be difficult to find a more contented set of old people than those who live in these Vienna homes. Grumblers, no doubt, there are; but that the great majority are happy seems manifest from the fact that the respectable poor, when their working days are over, repair gladly to these institutions. On the other hand, old men and women have been known to die of slow starvation rather than enter an English workhouse.

The supply of office accommodations afforded by these buildings of from ten to twenty stories in height seemed to be more than sufficient for the demand two or three years ago, but, presumably at least, the continuous erection of more, and the large and numerous projects for such buildings now under way, must be taken as an indication that even now the superior facilities of these great modern structures render investments in them profitable. The present methods of doing business, involving the maintenance of agencies of all sorts of corporations and manufacturers in all parts of the Union and in foreign countries, have created a largely increased demand for eligible offices in New York, which is most satisfactorily supplied by the new and lofty structures. They also draw off tenants from the older buildings of inferior accommodations. Undoubtedly the great amount of idle capital accumulated in New York encourages and stimulates this activity of landed property. Having been frightened by the experiences of the long period of depression from enterprises in which it formerly took risks, capital now is seeking the greater security of real estate investments, and even the small rate of interest at present obtainable from them may be better than what it can get with safety elsewhere. Moreover, money can be borrowed on good mortgages for from 4 to 4½ per cent.

The professional experts of the real estate market and the men who make a business of landed speculations are prophesying and expecting still further advances in the price of the best down-town property during the coming autumn. The destruction of old buildings in the chief business centres and the erection of lofty structures on their sites has only begun, they say. Except where the property is tied up in some way, they are looking forward to an even more general transformation of the kind as necessary to make the land profitable to its owners. The new modern buildings that are put up, with superior accommodations, the greater is the difficulty of renting the old, except at concessions which make them an undesirable investment. The increase in the value of the land has made essential the erection of storehouses that shall most fully utilize its space, if the holding of it is to be profitable in current revenue. Hence the real estate experts look for greater temptations for the owners to sell out to combinations of capital prepared to make improvements which they themselves are unable to undertake.

Undoubtedly there still remain great numbers of old-fashioned buildings in the choice situations for business, and, if they are to be replaced by these lofty structures, architects will have a rich harvest in the future. Such a utilization of the comparatively limited area of land in the lower part of the town would have the consequence of keeping there the centre of business and financial activity by supplying accommodations for the increase of a long period to come; and hence the erection of so

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Taking together Brazil's arrest of TRÉJAS and his force of French constabulary a few months ago, the attempt thereupon of Gov. CHATELAIN of French Guiana to get satisfaction by force, with the gunboat *Bengali*, the conflict between the opposing forces, and the present excitement both at Cayenne and Mapa, the urgency of the resort to arbitration is clear. Sweden should be an impartial referee, and is apparently an excellent choice.

The dispute thus to be settled arose more than two hundred years ago between France and Portugal, to whose rights Brazil succeeded. The French originally wanted to claim everything from Cayenne down to the left bank of the Amazon, but at length agreed to be bounded by a certain stream. In the process of time a dispute arose over the identification of that stream, Portugal declaring that it was the Oyapoc, which enters the ocean at Cape Orange, and France insisting that it was the Araguay, or its north branch. The intervening region of France and Brazil, more than half a cen-

tury ago, agreed to hold neutral. It was a temporary arrangement, but the region was then considered as of small value, and it had few inhabitants. Perhaps the policy might have proved satisfactory to this day had not M. TAMM discovered, last winter, deposits of gold in the Caravenne district, which caused a rush thither, and rendered of much more importance the real ownership of the disputed tract, which is called sometimes *Comana*, from its chief town, and sometimes *Amayá*.

If this Comana boundary dispute between French Guiana and Brazil can thus be settled by peaceful arbitration, why, also, should not the Cayana boundary dispute between British Guiana and Venezuela? Both date back for centuries, and both have become urgent in later days through the discovery and working of gold fields. Should the protocol drawn up by the French and Brazilian representatives at Rio Janeiro be ratified, it will form an object lesson for England, with whom Venezuela desires to arrange a compact of arbitration in their dispute.

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The Transformation of Lower New York.

The great and increasing value of land in the busy centre of New York is indicated by the price just paid by the Commercial Cable Company for a comparatively small piece of land in Broad street. The plot, which runs through to New street and contains only about 7,000 square feet, was sold for about \$1,250,000, or nearly \$105 per square foot of land. It was bought from a real estate operator, by whom it was purchased on speculation two years ago at a price which was then regarded as exorbitantly high; but now, within a time so short, he has been able to turn it over to the cable company at a handsome profit.

In order to justify so large an investment for a piece of property of only about the area of three city lots, the purchasing company will erect on the site a building of eighteen stories high at a cost of a million or more, from the rentals of which in that famous financial centre it expects, with reasonable confidence, to get a good interest on the total outlay of about \$2,250,000. It is proceeding on the theory, justified by experience, that the best property, even though it be the highest priced, is that most likely to be profitable as an investment. The cost of such land and of the structure which must be built on it to make the investment desirable is now so great that only corporations with large capital or individuals with estates having great sums of money at their command are able to pay it. During the recent and continuous rise in the value of all building sites of the best class the heavy transactions in the real estate market have been made almost wholly by such corporations or by combinations of capitalists, and it is they that have put up, or are yet to erect, the lofty business structures which distinguish this period.

The supply of office accommodations afforded by these buildings of from ten to twenty stories in height seemed to be more than sufficient for the demand two or three years ago, but, presumably at least, the continuous erection of more, and the large and numerous projects for such buildings now under way, must be taken as an indication that even now the superior facilities of these great modern structures render investments in them profitable. The present methods of doing business, involving the maintenance of agencies of all sorts of corporations and manufacturers in all parts of the Union and in foreign countries, have created a largely increased demand for eligible offices in New York, which is most satisfactorily supplied by the new and lofty structures. They also draw off tenants from the older buildings of inferior accommodations. Undoubtedly the great amount of idle capital accumulated in New York encourages and stimulates this activity of landed property. Having been frightened by the experiences of the long period of depression from enterprises in which it formerly took risks, capital now is seeking the greater security of real estate investments, and even the small rate of interest at present obtainable from them may be better than what it can get with safety elsewhere. Moreover, money can be borrowed on good mortgages for from 4 to 4½ per cent.

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The Countess Boundary Dispute.

The selection of King OSCAR of Sweden as arbitrator in the controversy between France and Brazil marks another important step toward its peaceful settlement.

Hot talk of extending the bounds of French Guiana clear down to the Amazon has been heard in Cayenne, and it is even said that some of the lads of the French colony had gone into the disputed region, nominally as prospectors for gold, but really in order to hunt down the irregular Brazilian forces, perhaps somewhat as American boys brought up on the dime novel go West to fight Indians.

Taking together Brazil's arrest of TRÉJAS and his force of French constabulary a few months ago, the attempt thereupon of Gov. CHATELAIN of French Guiana to get satisfaction by force, with the gunboat *Bengali*, the conflict between the opposing forces, and the present excitement both at Cayenne and Mapa, the urgency of the resort to arbitration is clear. Sweden should be an impartial referee, and is apparently an excellent choice.

The dispute thus to be settled arose more than two hundred years ago between France and Portugal, to whose rights Brazil succeeded. The French originally wanted to claim everything from Cayenne down to the left bank of the Amazon, but at length agreed to be bounded by a certain stream. In the process of time a dispute arose over the identification of that stream, Portugal declaring that it was the Oyapoc, which enters the ocean at Cape Orange, and France insisting that it was the Araguay, or its north branch. The intervening region of France and Brazil, more than half a cen-

A SIGHT TO MAKE ONE CRY.

Bad News from the Commodore.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—Sir: The sun has made sad havoc with the crops all over the West for the last ten days. Even Kansas has not been spared, and the corn in the garden spot of Illinois, from Springfield to Galena, and Decatur, has been badly burned. Fields which promised prodigious crops two weeks ago will not produce half a crop. Everywhere, for a radius of fifty miles around Galesburg, the chinch bugs fill the air. When they have filled themselves with the growing corn they lie down, sometimes half an inch thick, between the rows of corn.

Indiana, from Logansport on the Wabash bottom, to Indianapolis and to Columbus, O., will produce half a crop. From Columbus to Cincinnati, and all over the Little Miami, the stalks are burned to a crisp, and a third of a crop is all that remains. In some places the corn has been broken out all the exposed windows in Newton and Wichita, Kan., laying the corn flat and thrashing the leaves into shreds. It is a sight to make one cry.

The corn estimates of two weeks ago are all off now. With 300,000,000 bushels of corn burned in the Western States, from Lincoln to St. Joseph, Mo., and from Lincoln to Omaha, with the sun and hail in northeastern Kansas, the sun and chinch bugs in Illinois, and the crop badly burned all over southern Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, we will have to reduce our first estimate of 2,000,000,000 bushels to 2,000,000,000, with a chance of dropping to 1,800,000,000. This need create no alarm, as 2,000,000,000 bushels of corn at an average price of 30 cents, or 60 cents, will be worth \$600,000,000. Hay will be scarce all over the United States, but the fodder crops will be up to 4,000,000,000 bushels of ears, will be as valuable as hay.

More than 100,000 bushels of corn stand eight feet high with no ear. You ask how the corn burns? It will look like a forest fire, and promise fifty bushels to the acre. The stalks will stand up proud and straight. Then the dry, hot wind will come, and it will be a crisis. It kills the seed which was soon to drop down on the silk and make the corn on the ear. So the corn is burned up to the neck, and the stalks stand right, but examine it closely and it is so much ash. They call it "Cleveland corn" in Nebraska, but it promises as much and then it lies on its back.

ON THE TRAIN IN ILLINOIS, AUG. 22.

Manhattan Chess Club Troubles Again.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—Sir: I have not approved of the letter signed "Member of the Manhattan Chess Club," which you published Aug. 4, nor of the letter of "Another Member," printed Aug. 10. I am a member of the Manhattan Chess Club, and I have no sympathy whatever with the so-called "kickers."

The letters mentioned are provoking so much discussion that many of us hope the directors will not delay taking proper action with regard to them.

Our side, it seems to me, is entitled to some reply to such searching public criticism as your correspondents have chosen to indulge in, and particularly in view of what is privately being repeated at the club.

The third story, which must be equally false, is that the directors of the Manhattan Chess Club at Manhattan, N. Y., are planning to play for the Manhattan Chess